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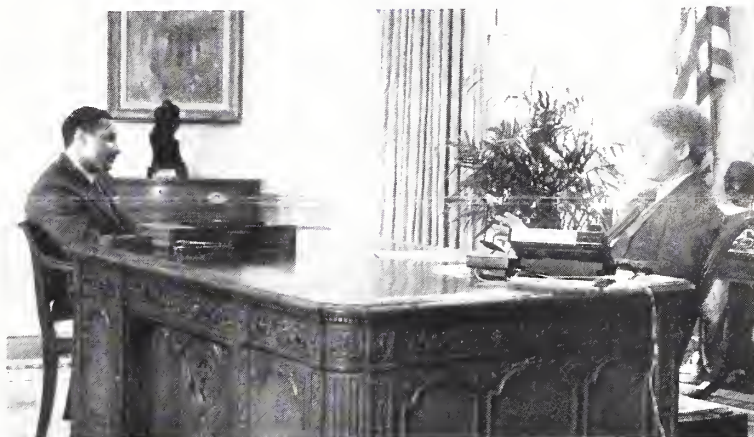
Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250-1340 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2618

July 9, 1993

Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy recently met with President Clinton to discuss steps easing damage to agriculture caused by excessive rains in the upper midwest, the President's Northwest forest plan, and the Secretary's tour of the regions. To help farmers Espy has announced a number of changes in farm programs including extension of deadlines, flexibility in refunds, and Farmers Home Administration loans. USDA photo by Byron Schumaker.



GRAIN STOCKS -- Stored corn is estimated at 3.7 billion bushels, up 35 percent from June 1 of last year. 2.2 billion bushels of corn is stored on farms, up 46 percent from last year. Wheat stocks total 529 billion bushels, up 12 percent from a year ago. Farm stocks at 184 million bushels are up 27 percent. Soybeans total 683 million bushels, 2 percent below a year ago. On-farm stocks are estimated at 320 million bushels, 15 percent above a year ago and nearly half the total soybean stocks available. **Contact: Rich Allen (202) 720-4333.**

CHERRY PRODUCTION -- Michigan, the nation's leader in production of tart cherries, expects a crop this year of 275 million pounds, up 12 percent from last year and more than double the 1991 crop. A cool spring has held diseases in check, but slowed development. The crop in Pennsylvania is forecast at 11 million pounds, 83 percent higher than last year. Wisconsin is expected to produce 9.3 million pounds, two percent more than in 1992. Cherry production in New York is forecast at 14.8 million pounds, down 52 percent from last year due to frost damage last April. **Contact: Jim Brewster (202) 720-7688.**

DAIRY OUTLOOK -- Milk production during the second half of 1993 is expected to be slightly below a year earlier. Demand for milk solids may increase if the economic recovery firms. Milkfat sales should remain strong. Prices are expected to stabilize this summer and rise seasonally this autumn. For all of 1993, milk output is projected to be near 1992 levels, as a slight increase in milk per cow is offset by a decrease in milk cow numbers. Farm milk prices are projected to decline three to four percent. **Contact: James Miller (202) 219-0770.**

VEGGIES AND SAUCE -- Export markets are having an increasingly important role in driving the sales growth of frozen vegetables. Major efforts are underway to bring new value added frozen mixed vegetable lines to market. The new blends, stir fries, salads and soups are expected to boost sales, increase profits and create jobs for the U.S. vegetable industry. The next step in product innovation to boost declining domestic sales and expand exports is ready-to-use sauces in a pouch to create new flavor themes and added convenience. **Contact: Ernest Carter (202) 720-2922.**

RUSSIAN AG LAWS -- The Russian Parliament has passed laws to increase grain subsidies and price supports to boost grain production, and to reduce dependence on imports. The laws call for higher prices, tax breaks and low-interest credit for Russian farmers. The program will raise agriculture spending, which already consumes one-third of Russia's total budget. Farmers remain skeptical, and observers indicate that increasing expenditures on domestic production without market-oriented reforms may mean that Russian hard currency will continue to be spent on grain imports. **Contact: Mike Woosley (202) 720-1294.**

DURUM IMPORTS -- U.S. wheat and wheat product imports reached a record 72 million bushels during the marketing year ending May 1993. The grain portion, accounting for 65 percent of the total came almost exclusively from Canada, where government-assisted income protection for producers has increased acreage. The product portion of U.S. durum imports is coming mostly from Europe, and is supported by large export subsidies. During the marketing year the European Community spent \$115 per ton on pasta made from durum wheat for delivery to the United States. **Contact: Eric Wenberg (202) 690-4134.**

THE TRADE BALANCE WITH CHINA -- Total U.S. exports to China in 1992 reached \$7.5 billion, while imports from China gained 36 percent to \$25.8 billion, leaving the U.S. with a merchandise trade deficit of \$18.3 billion. But the agricultural trade balance remained positive. U.S. agricultural exports fell from \$722 million in 1991 to \$545 million in 1992 because of lower wheat shipments. U.S. agricultural imports from China increased from \$328 million in 1991 to \$379 million in 1992, creating a reduced but positive balance of \$166 million. **Contact: Frederick Cook (202) 219-0610.**

TOBACCO IMPORTS AND EXPORTS -- U.S. unmanufactured tobacco exports for the first three months of this year totaled nearly 85,000 tons, valued at \$503 million, a decrease of 13 percent in quantity and 19 percent in value compared to the same period in 1992. Unmanufactured U.S. tobacco imports for the same period totaled 139,000 tons valued at \$425 million, an increase of 90 percent in quantity and 83 percent in value. U.S. cigarette exports totaled 59 billion pieces valued at \$1 billion, an increase of 16 percent in quantity and 14 percent in value. **Contact: Verner Grise (202) 219-0890.**

RURAL HEALTH INSURANCE -- Recent studies show that rural and urban residents under age 65 are equally likely to be covered by health insurance, but rural residents continue to have less access to employment related coverage. Rural workers are more likely to be employed by small firms than urban workers, and small firms are much less likely to offer health benefits than large firms. Many States have recently adopted measures to improve access to health insurance for small businesses, including regulatory reforms and formation of risk pools of companies, but the new measures have yet to increase the coverage rate among small-firm workers. **Contact: Paul Frenzen (202) 219-0540.**

PROTECTING BODY TISSUES AGAINST OXIDATION -- Tests at USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center, in Grand Forks, North Dakota, show that dietary copper helps to deactivate oxygen-containing compounds that cause damage to the body. The findings suggest that U.S. diets, the majority of which are deficient in dietary copper, may not be providing optimum protection against atmospheric oxidants. Dietary copper can be increased by adding oysters, liver, whole wheat, nuts and sunflower seeds to the diet. **Contact: Jack Saari (701) 795-8499.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1883 -- Brenda Curtis talks with University of Maryland Extension financial planning specialist **Mary Stephenson** about ways to get control of your personal finances. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1365 -- Hunger forum; NAFTA & U.S. livestock and dairy producers; a cowboy tradition; blood clotting & heart disease; getting a good credit deal. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1875 -- USDA News Highlights; compliance policy changes; farm broadcasting in Russia; food safety at the farm level; new grasses for the west. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1628 -- Tough new range grass; drought tolerant turf; faster test for plant disease; blood platelets & heart disease; nickel essential to plants. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, July 19, Ag outlook; Tuesday, July 20, crop & weather update, world ag/grain production, world oilseed production, world cotton situation; Wednesday, July 21, mink production, fruit yearbook; Thursday, July 22, catfish processing; Friday, July 23, livestock/poultry update, cattle on feed; Monday, July 26, rice yearbook. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on changes in weather forecasting; Lynn Wyvill reports on vitamin E and the elderly; DeBoria Janifer reports on a new "high tech" rice variety; and Will Pemble on biodegradable products from cornstarch.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen with the weekly weather and crop update; USDA economists Joel Greene and Michael Kurtzig on U.S. farm exports; USDA economist Lewrene Glaser on industrial uses for farm products.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on computer landscaping advice; Lynn Wyvill reports on bridges made of timber; and DeBoria Janifer reports on fresh produce in food banks.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

LOWLAND CROPS...are heavily damaged, but the higher cropland is a mess too, says **Earl Hunter** (WKTY, La Crosse, WI). The wettest June since 1900 has turned the clay soil into heavy, sticky mud. The area has had a year's worth of rain in six months. Crops that escaped the flood need hot, dry weather. Earl says both the strawberry and apple crops are doing surprisingly well.

CORN AND BEANS...have been replanted, but both are way behind schedule, says **Dick Radke** (KOLM/KWWK Rochester, MN). Corn is only half as high as it should be, and the hay crop has been difficult to get in. It has rained after cutting, and rained after turning. Dick says the region has been under a 2-3 schedule, two days of cloudy skies and three days of rain.

OUR SOYBEAN PRODUCERS...are smiling, says **Stewart Doan** (ARN Agriculture Network, Little Rock, AR). They planted the most acres since 1985 and the crop looks good. Wheat harvest did well, the state average is 40 bushels an acre. Stewart says now all the region needs is rain.

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ANNUAL JUNE DAIRY BREAKFAST...was attended by 1,700 farm and city residents, says **Louie Rosandick** (WFHR/WWRW, Wisconsin Rapids, WI). Sponsored by WFHR and Midstate Technical College, the adults enjoyed the food at the Ashbeck family farm, and the kids liked petting the baby calves. Louis covered the events live.

HAIL...damaged sections of the wheat and dry edible bean crops, says **Howard Hale** (KOLT/Agribiznet, Scottsbluff, NE). Portions of the bean crop had to be replanted. Howard says mountain snowfall and periodic rain has developed the best irrigation outlook in five years.

A NEW PARTNERSHIP...is underway between AgriAmerica Network, Indianapolis, IN and Agri Communicators, Columbus, OH, says **Gary Truitt** (AgriAmerica Network). AgriAmerica will participate in the production and marketing of the "Agri Country" TV program. Gary and his assistant farm director **Darrin Johnston** will host segments relating to Indiana agriculture. "Agri Country" is a weekly half-hour hosted by **Ed Johnson** (ABN Radio/TV, Columbus, OH).

VIC POWELL 
Chief, Radio & TV Division